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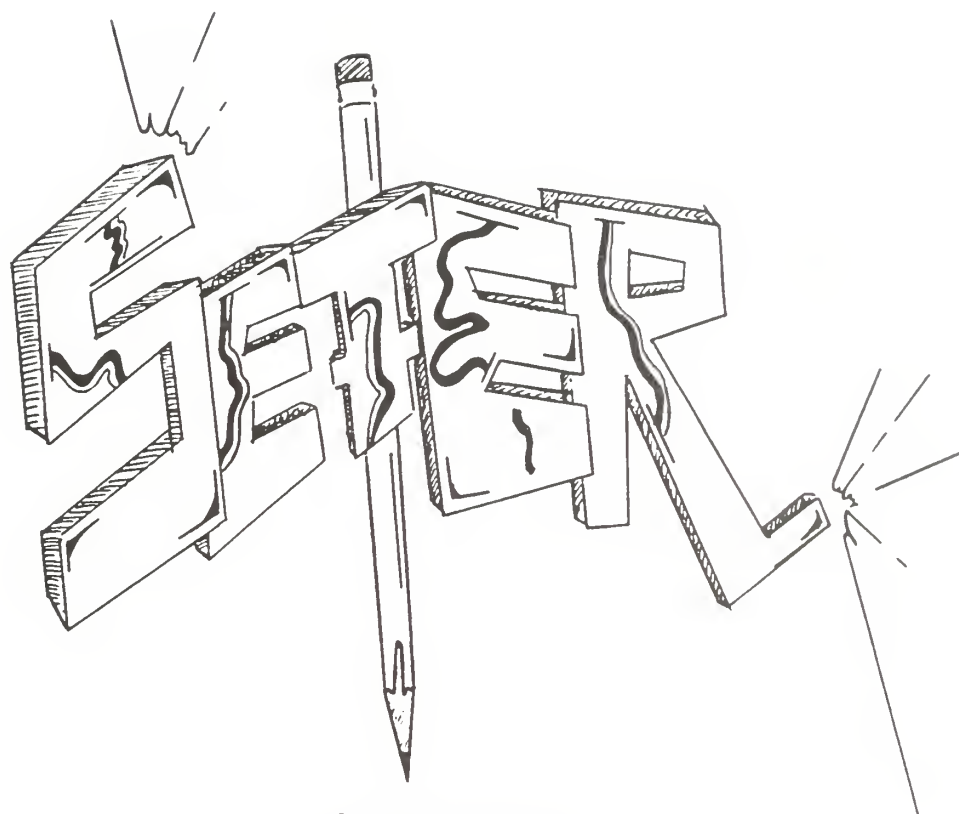
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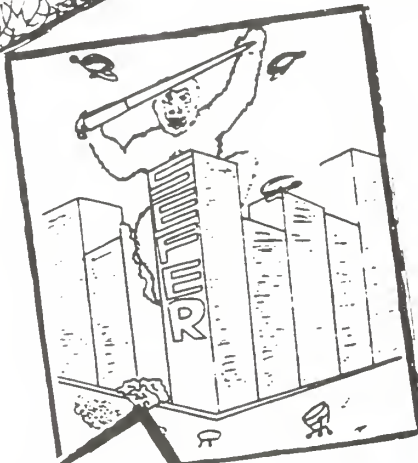
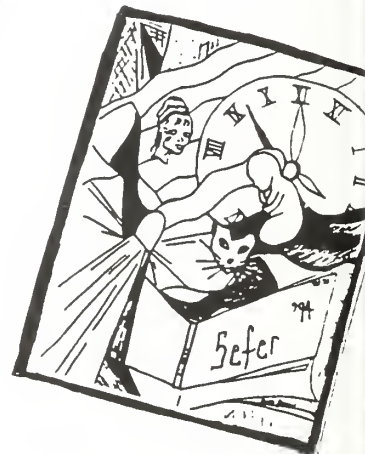
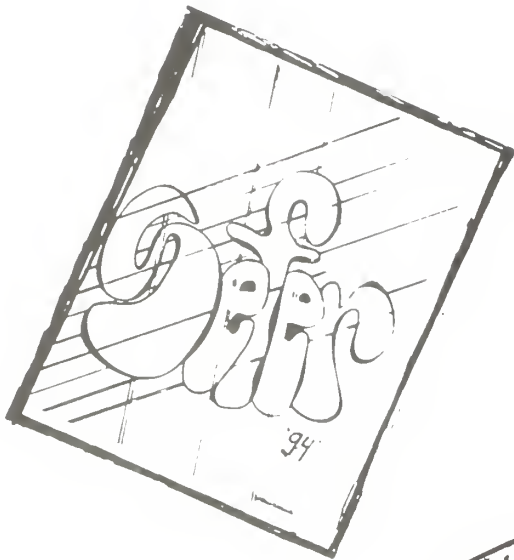
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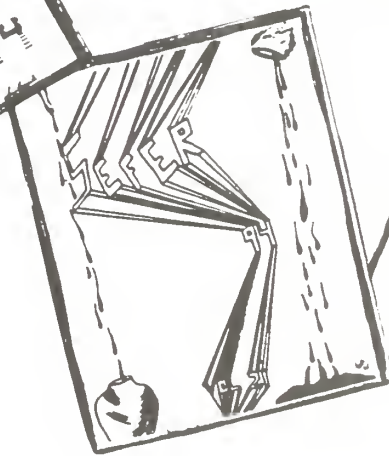
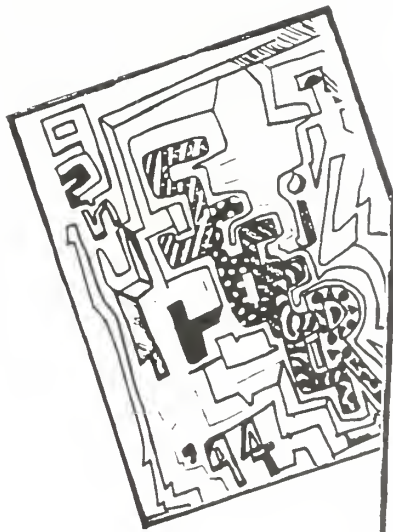
Thomas Webb

Anonymous 212

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An Awakening

I sit here at the keyboard tapping,
Though it's late and I should be napping,
I was awakened by the strangest happening-
The fear of loss completely drenched my soul.

"The loss of what?," you wonder.
The thought turns my pulse to Thunder
And constantly keeps me under,
Under great duress.

The answer should not be surprising!
It's your love and comprising
That aids in Life's uprisings
And gets me through each day.

I know your heart is still retreating
And your love for me depleting,
As my heart won't stop secreting,
Secreting tears of pain.

I pray hard for the Lord's assistance;
I need His strength for my persistence,
And His stamina to go the distance
With you by my side.

Until the end, I will pursue it
and I promise to renew it,
Even if you think I blew it
I'll save your love for me.

Though our hearts have been at war
And you've nearly closed the door,
I have never loved you more
than I do right now.

Of Man And Truth

Once In a very vivid dream
I learned a lot of things,
Like truth may not be what it seems
and sometimes comes in rings.

To the "vicious circle" as it's called
You will not find an end;
However, man is clever
And has found that truth will bend.

At first they twist a little
And then fed by that success,
They mount the task in earnest
To see who can bend it best.

In my dream, I was in heaven
Or something of the sort.
And the angels were all laughing
As if involved in joyous sport.

They were looking down upon the earth
With guffaws all around.
I tried to find the source of mirth
But nothing could be found.

Bewildered, I inquired
Of the angel next to me.
I asked what they thought funny
That I, " mortal" could not see.

Then I was told a story
That embarrassed me to life.
One of needless human misery
And everlasting strife.

I was shown the massive grindstone
Where the diamond of truth was ground
And told the precious powder
Had been sprinkled all around.

Where mortal man could find it
And have the truth at last
To know about his future
And understand his past.

But that man remains imperfect
Was the plainest truth to fall,
For each picked up a piece of it
And claimed he had it all.

These particles became the creeds
That built the temples grand;
As though truth was something you could own
And hold within your hand.

The Catholic, the Mormon,
The Buddhist and the Jew
Said, "Behold my brethren, follow me,
For what I have is true"!

And this has been the way of man
Since first the truth was scattered.
Each clung devoutly to "his find"
And naught else ever mattered.

And this was why some angels laughed
And some were not amused,
Though he'd been given all the truth,
Man still remained confused.

For each step forward man does take,
The longer is his trip;
Unaware, he just keeps turning
On his self-made mobius strip.

The Death of Know-it-All Sam

Here lies what's left of Samuel Stark,
Since, the dolphin he petted was really a shark.
You see, Sammy thought he was always so right.
"Dolphins are tame," said he, "they don't bite."
But nobody told the shark how to behave.
Now, Sammy has only one foot for his grave.
So don't be like Sammy and live by assumption
Or you may become some smart shark's consumption!

Cora's Song

Where'd she go?

I long to pinch those chipmunk cheeks and wipe that runny
nose.

Where's she now?

Locked inside a big girl's heart in a place where I can't
go.

I toss, and turn, and wonder what it is my dream has said.

Then a vision of a little girl awakes within my head.

She's not the one who sees me now, as her mother's former
man,

But the one who'd try to please me in any way she can.

Where'd she go?

Why does she think that I don't need her love, and feel no
pain?

Is it because her daddy always left the dragon slain?

That sword that made me famous has now become a cross.

And I kneel and pray before it for the daughter that I've
lost.

Where'd she go?

When will we fly that kite again? When will we laugh so
free?

When will I hold her tight again? Is it too late for me?

Will she walk--that field--above me and place flowers in the
grass?

Before she can feel she loves me, and be with me at last?

Where'd she go?

Emily Conyers

To a Lifeless Tree

Where has your green gone,
you, once so lush and free?
The brilliant leaves that used to fall
at every autumn breeze?

Your limbs are rigid,
old and tough.
Your once smooth surface
now is rough.

Where is your companion, now, the wind?
Long ago, it would gently sigh
through your leafy boughs
on a summer's eve gone by.

Your dead aura wholly depressed it,
and the wind howls mournfully
through the bare branches
of a dead tree.

Photograph

A glimpse of frozen time.
A lifeless carcass of a memorable
moment.

It captures the look,
but lets the soul escape.

Movement suspended.
A body trapped forever in
one position.

It never shows the
before or after.

Gone.
Time is slipping through
our fingers
and all we can do to save it is
glean the outer shell
with
film and flash.

A Wrinkle

To me a wrinkle reflects
The wisdom of many years,
Hardships, perseverance,
And also
Fears.

Because
A wrinkle remembers good times
As surely as it shows
Times that were bad,
I am always awe struck
In the presence of a wrinkle.

To me a wrinkle
Is no laughing matter.
I can feel only love
For the line a wrinkle carries,
Love for this sign of joy and,
Yes even of pain.

But, if you are among those
Who would ignore
The wonder of a wrinkle,
I can only warn.

Remember not to laugh,
When next you see a wrinkle,
For you will be looking
At your future.

Maybe this is not you now,
But someday down the line,
Not too far away?
A wrinkle.

Help?

A child beaten and abused,
wasted and used.

Tears flow,
fears grow.

Constant pain,
Awful shame.

WHAT DID I DO?
WHAT CAN I DO?

I just want to play,
But all I can do is pray.

Can you make a difference?
Give me deliverance?

Help me?
Please.

Hate Is Poison

Hate is barbed wire.
It makes the scene dim.
Can you tell me why
It's so grim?
Give me warmth.
Hate is barbed wire.

Near a scorched field,
Near a rusting train,
I fall down and pray
Under rain.
Thugs bomb a shop.
Hoodlums knife a cop.
Hate is barbed wire.

Hate is nerve gas
And charred land,
And fire burning your hand.
See the red fangs.
Fly from the white gangs.
Hate is barbed wire.

Hate is barbed wire.
It makes the scene dim.
Can you tell me why
It's so grim?
I must touch
Barbed wire.

Hooded men meet
To burn a cross.
I need
To feel the loss.
Cursing toughs, yelling rogues, jeering brutes
Pistol-whip my head.

Hate is gangrene
From a deep harm,
Decay which spreads
From a deadened arm.
Feel the stabber,
Dagger,
Barbed wire.

Hate is barbed wire.
It makes the scene dim.
Can you tell me why
It's so grim?
I must touch
Barbed wire.

Hate is poison.
It flows out a crack.
Can you tell me why
It's so black?
Give me light.
Hate is poison.

By a dead tree,
By some barren ground,
I stand up and move
Without sound.

Clouds hide the sun.
Someone fires a gun.
Hate is poison.

Hate is acid
And storm sleet,
And glass cutting your feet.
Touch the white coal.
Climb out of the hole.
Hate is poison.

Hate is poison.
It flows out a crack.
Can you tell me why
It's so black?
I must taste
Poison.

A mob rises
To hunt down freaks.
I want
To hide for weeks.
Shaking fists,
glaring looks,
seething words
Surround my raw form.

Hate is raving
In a closed tomb,
Lashing about
In a trash-filled room.
Smell the carnage,
Sewage,
Poison.

Hate is poison.
It flows out a crack.
Can you tell me why
It's so black?
I must taste
Poison.

Light the Sky

Sabrina, why did you spurn grace?
Sabrina, why did you kiss my face?
Your ghost is free.
Your black eyes hurt me.

Sabrina, why did you scoff prayer?
Sabrina, why did you touch my hair?
Your skin is warm.
Your smile calms the storm.

Sabrina, why did you shun zeal?
Sabrina, why did you make me kneel?
Your form is white.
Your breath charms the night.

Please, drift.
Please, make the clouds rain.
Please, walk.
Please take me away from the pain.
Please, fly.
Please, anoint my feet.
Please, chant.
Please, give me the fruit tasting sweet.

Your lips glow one way.
Your eyes glow another.
You say your love's like a red fire
Which you'll allow to warm my hands.
Your lips glow one way.
Your eyes glow another.

Your feet move one way.
Your arms move another.
You say your love's like a warm breeze
Which you'll allow to caress my skin.
Your feet move one way.
Your arms move another.

Sabrina, how did you nurse lies?
Sabrina, how did you clear my eyes?
Your lip is red.
Your songs soothe the dead.

Sabrina, how did you hold snakes?
Sabrina, how did you heal my aches?
Your shame is lost.
Your words melt the frost.

Sabrina, how did you crush stone?
Sabrina, how did you make me groan?
Your faith is dry.
Your thoughts light the sky.

Please, run.
Please, be in my dream.
Please, laugh.
Please, purify me in the stream.

Please, knock.
Please, restore my flesh.
Please, yell.
Please, give me the bread smelling fresh.

Your gaze spells one thing.
Your laugh spells something else.
You say your love's like a bright sun
Which you'll allow to illumine my head.
Your gaze spells one thing.
Your laugh spells something else.

Your smile means one thing.
Your pose means something else.
You say your love's like a soft rain
Which you'll allow to sprinkle my face.
Your smile means one thing.
Your pose means something else.

Mediocrity

This is the plan:
To take a young man
With thoughts of his own
And make, if they can,
A weak, mindless drone.

To take given rights
And toss them away.
To extinguish the light
and make night of his day.

This is the plan
And choosing to stay,
Freedom is banned,
Morality decays.

The weak ones will stay
For several years and more,
And sell out their dreams
Like street-corner whores.

With lack of ambition
They have to be led.
Simple truth told,
They resemble the dead.

So despise the plan
But pity the man.
Born without will,
From free thought he ran.

What can be done,
Humanity sold short?
For a few measly bucks
Mediocrity he'll court.

Simplicity

Sometimes life brings me down,
Makes me frown,
I feel I'll drown.
I don't know what's real,
Pain I feel,
My wounds won't heal.

But then,
Someone comes along,
Makes everything right,
Not wrong,
And I sing a song.

With my check I brush your dimple,
And life is simple.

Puppets

In a fantasy world they live,
With no truth to give.
Providing shackles and chains
With nothing to gain,
Just pain.
Convincing the weak they are jewels
Even as they are fools,
A war-monger's tools.

Result of Reason

The pain is quick to show its boiling face,
Red hot it brands the cheeks and heart.
Seething anger follows to its rightful place,
Wantonly ripping the soul apart.

Feelings unrestricted condemned,
Perpetual night falls around me
Once again.

Mobius Dick's Gluttony

A black fish.
Bellowing,
Snorting,
Excreting,
Spending itself.
Selfishly groping,
Taking all, giving nothing.
Struggling to breathe.
Dying to live.
While fiercely eating its own guts,
Gorging itself.

A Speaker in Repose

I recall in days gone by--
Why I recall I do not know--
But yet I do recall

'Twas not so long ago--all lost they were
Lost all one by one--
Yes, 'tis true, by death, by death they all were lost!

And now I see them, see them all I do!
There, yes there, see him there!!
There stands John, and beside him--
Beside him, in his hand, he holds the gun--
The gun by which he took his life!!?

Over there, there by the hearth, yes there recline the rest!
O bitter days!
Why haunt you me now!!
Go, go and leave me be!

Then long I lay and recalled those days and shuddered as they left--
And whilst I thought I wiped--
I wiped ever so gently those pages where the fruits of my sorrow fell--

And now--now in sleep and slumber I do drift--
O gentle sleep, how sweet thou art--
Carry me, bear me onward.
I am weak and thy rest I do require.

The Procrastinator

Two boys there were
No companion born to them
They walked together and talked together
And frolicked in the wood. Many a day was spent this way:
Riding and hiking and camping.
Now from time to time the two would stop
-on one leg of the trip-
Out by the Great Rock Fortress
Where they many a skirmish fought.
As years went on and the boys grew,
The two they closer bound. Now soon to them it seemed
that time was gone
As the days went by, these men with friendship close at heart grew old
but the one the other ne'er forgot.
And so it went from year to year.
But alas, as it is with us all
-Death soon pursued-
Now as the news of an old man's tragic death went round,
It finally fell on the ear of a wise but feeble man;
And he then wept and wept.
His tears were of bitter thoughts, for now his chance
Along with his old friend had passed.
It is this truth that you must see,
T'was too late for him to say
"I love you for you were more than friend-
I was proud to call you brother."

Perfection Personified

You were truly
wonderfully
and fearfully wrought
in Greek perfection.

Your eyes could be no other
than Plutonian fragments
which great Zeus himself
snatched from the cosmos.

Your body,
it could only have been beheld
by the eye of da Vinci
and related in detail
to Rodan

In marble,
with masterful hands
he chiseled you,
and with gold you were gilded.

You,
their ultimate perfection,
they presented to the heavens.

Zeus,
he set your eyes of ice
and with a whisper of delight
he breathed life into you.

From across the river Styx he brought you,
and into this world you fell.

With gifts from the gods you have lived.

And among man
you have been set,
a thing of the gods,
to delight our eyes
and to put envy in our hearts.

LAVP7A1

The great filthy beasts yowled in the desert sun,
a hollow and lonely sound.
Fire and brimstone poured forth from their jowls
and total carnage lay beneath their trampling feet.
They slowed but once for pockets of death under shifting sands,
their breath now silent with fear.
But once clear of the razor's tangled mass,
their fury burst forth unabated.
And with mass destruction, some few souls
were liberated.
The beasts now sleep,
the quiet,
broken only by the silence of the dead.

**LAVP7A1 is an amphibious armored assault vehicle used by the Marines in Desert Storm.

Eve of the Storm

A night of prayer, of comforting brothers.
A night of exposing our darkest blood.
A night of sleepless dreams.
A dawn of fear.
A horizon of darkness.
..Yea though I walk..
Encroaching.
..Through the valley..
Enveloping.
..of the shadow..
Choking.
..of Death..

Ron Lowe

Sleep Well My Brothers

Semper Fidelis my brothers.
Spill your blood upon the sand.
For God and country they told us,
to die in this foreign land.
Breathe not too deeply,
for the air has a serpent's bite.
Tread not too heavily,
or send blood and bone into the night.
Sleep well my brothers,
for tomorrow we fight.

**Semper Fidelis is the Marine Corps motto for Always Faithful.

Teaching

The most awesome responsibility
is molding children
into all they can be.

A teacher has many roles to play;
we must act them out,
in every way.

Whether it's a pat on the back,
a daily hug,
or just listening when they're sad.
We must play many roles,
every day!
For some, we're all they have.

We must remember,
That all children are the same.
Yet, they're different too.
They all have needs.
But their needs aren't the same.

My desire is to meet their needs.
But at the same time,
-to instill a thirst,
-to plant a seed,
-to help them grow,
-so to the world, they can show,
-their wonder of Life,
that's captured with all their might.

Therefore, the construction of a good teacher,
has many parts.
The most important being,
purity of heart.

I know I'll hear many heart strings each day.
I ask God to tune mine,
to HIS pleasing way.

The intensity of mastery,
won't come easily.
Please Lord, mold and make me,
into the best teacher I can be.

Help me make doors,
when there are no doorways.
Help me make keys,
when locks are broken.
Nine months is such a short time.
Help me to be effective,
and yes, to shine.

I really do.
want to be the best.
But only through YOU,
can I be that blessed.

Oh My My!

Heavens to Betsy
and Mergatroids too!
So much is going on
I don't know what to do.

I do not know where
to begin this task,
But boy will I be glad--
when I am through at last.

I hate doing housework
-And that laundry multiplies.
Sometimes, there is so much to do
I could just sit down and cry.

And who invented dust anyway?
That person should be shot
-or at least sent away!

-And what about that toilet lid?
They leave it up
and one dark night
-well, I fell in.
I thought, surely this must rate
a punishment for the sin.

-And what about my snoring spouse?
His sounds echo throughout the house.
I keep thinking that a new
invention would plug him UP!
But, he just keeps sawing and sawing
and will not hush.

And yard work. I love to work in the yard!
It gives me a feeling of "I'm in charge."
But I have become submerged
in homework and housework.
My husband says I had best let
them go and focus on husband work.

So, the yard, the house, and ETC.
will have to wait.
Because I'm going to enjoy my man
and show him how he rates.

Jeff Rotter

You will find the friendly south
In words and in woods
Battered; struggling with the
Rain

Old men speak sparsely
Their wives, a flow of woodwind
Nonsense
Their dogs, they just don't care

Townies will tell,
If they think to do so,
Of dangerous bridges
And ponds unsafe for bathing

The sky's the same old blue,
And white, and grey,
But the earth
And its children
Tell the friendly in the south
Masked all too often
By the fear and suspicion
In ugly eyes,
For ugly men

Sit quietly,
Crouch behind a rotting stump
Wary of the friendly
In the south.

Come out of Disguise!

Come out of disguise!
And be yourself.
Stop trying to be
like someone else.

Come out of disguise!
And take off your mask.
Perform your own duties.
Perform your own task.

Come out of disguise!
And live your own name
by being "you."
There is no shame to feel
When your true identity
Is being Revealed
And you can live more honestly in
knowing that you are real.
Come out of disguise!

God's Trees

As a child I used to climb the trees
That would cradle me in their boughs.
I'd talk to them as if they knew
What my life was all about.

As I grew I came to know
Why the Child in me loves trees.
The more I'd talk the more I'd learn
That through Trees God spoke to me.

Like Christ they're born to comfort us
--to emulate God's love.
Protect, inspire, embrace with Care.
To bring us closer to God above.

Like Christ--who died on a Tree, no less
Trees die to help us live.
To shelter us, to give us warmth
From life through death, they Give.

When God made trees He surely knew
That, for All others, two lives would end.
The **saddened** Tree that held
Our Christ - who died; our souls to mend.

Don't question why I turn to trees
When it's God I need to be near.
I know He's there; the doors don't lock
And I know His trees have ears.

The Writer

All the world's a stage, wrote he;
We each must play our part.
Some roles in life tear-drenched will be --
Each tear etched deeply in our hearts.

We go through life in the actor's way,
changing roles to fit the need.
Transform ourselves to suit the play;
Some days we excel -- on others we bleed.

To make our **performance** the best it can be,
there's one thing we **have** to understand;
We must stick to the script our Heart can see;
For the Writer **is Wiser** than any "man."

Cocoon

Why can't I be a butterfly
both Beautiful and Free
And soar up to the deep, blue sky
and get in touch with Me?

I know it's not that easy, now;
it's not supposed to be.
I have to make myself a vow
to Look at what I see.

A caterpillar knows the way
to Beauty isn't far;
The price in Life you have to pay
may be your Pain and Scars.

The caterpillar goes inside
herself to find her Truths
and Looks beyond her Foolish Pride
into the Fears of Youth.

It's while inside her-self she Finds
her own Serenity.
In trusting in God's use of Time
she learns how to be Free.

I can't Expect to jump to Grace
by wishing on the moon.
I'll Crawl at Caterpillar's Pace
and Grow my own cocoon.

I'll wrap up warm and safe inside
God's strong, embracing Care
Until I can BE, satisfied
just knowing He is there.

Haze

I live in a world
Unique in its own way,
With its clear
Truths and beautiful
Clarity, life goes on.
But, there are times
When I must leave
This world; for
What I search, I
Cannot find here.

The world I live in
Is unique, but not
Alone. There is another,
Where there are no clear
Pictures, no blacks or
Whites; only the gray
Haze.

Ah, the haze. It's all
Encompassing, obscuring
Most things from view.
Yet, still I come, searching,
Hoping hoping to see
Her.

It is here that she walks.
In this world of haze.
It is here, in this world to
Which I must come, for
I cannot see her in
My world.

As I stand in my world,
The time comes, of its own
Accord. I relax, close my
Eyes, and slowly, so very slowly,
The haze comes. It washes over
Everything -- I can see it
Swirling at my feet, but I
Do not mind. I welcome the
Haze, for with it comes
Her.

Finally, after a time
I cannot define, I enter
Completely and wholly into
This other world. I have no time
To waste, none to spare.
I open my eyes.

At first, I see nothing,
Not in this world of haze.
I move on, walking, running,
I know not which. Looking,
Searching, I know she's here;

But where?

There she is! A figure,
Out there, gliding in the
Never-ending haze. She
Does not yet know I'm
Here. I must reach her, I
Must! I increase my
Speed, but I'm not
Tired. I never tire,
In the world of
Haze.

I catch up to her. With
But a glance, I soak
Up her beauty, and
Looking again, I drown in
It. Her sparkling, knowing
Eyes; her straightly, crooked
Back; the knowledge she holds,
And the knowledge she
Does not.

Slowly, she stops. Anxiously,
I wait as slowly she turns
Toward me. She smiles, oh
That smile of hers. I reach out,
And though my lips do not
Move, I urge her to return,
To return to my
World.

She steps forward, but
Hesitates. She smiles again,
And slowly shakes her
Head. I lose contact with
Her as she starts to walk, again.
I blink, quite naturally of
Course, but I know it's a mistake.
When I look back, the haze
Is already clearing.

I scream out! But only
A whisper escapes. I
Know she's lost back to the
Haze.

I look about the colors
Have returned. I know without
Checking that she is not here.
A tear traces it's way down
My cheek, ever so slowly.

I know I will return,
To my world of haze.
Yet for now, I am stuck,
Here, without her, in my world:
Reality.

Together at Last?

Silence.
It's one of the most
Disquieting noises around.
No phone rings, no
Mail to rip open.

You're so Nice,
That's right, Nice. Sweet,
Caring, Gentle, Hand-
Some.

Alone. A great friend,
But alone. Why are
You alone? You're a
Dream come true, or
So they say.

Like art, people admire,
But few desire. Is something
Wrong? With you? With them?
Or, Not at all?

Time will prove true, they
Say. How long can time
Tick on, alone? We are
Social animals, not
Good alone.

People pass by, and that's
All -- pass by. The silence
Is back. You're alone,
Not again, just a mere
Continuation.

Do not fear.
You are alone, though
Not alone. There is, they say,
Someone, in the five
Billion, for you. Wait.

You are not alone; you
Have patience to keep you
Company, for no one else
Will. Indeed, perhaps, you
Are....

Alone.

The Bear

The room is
Dark
Save for soft glows
From my lamps.
Quiet pervades -
I can hear
Wind whisper by.
I lie there, eyes
Closed, wanting
To make it
Real.
Lyrics flow, taking
Me away on
Clouds
of dreams.
But she's not
Here
And I'm still
Alone
Tonight.
So I hold it
Close
Yet still
No substitute.

The Baby Cries for Sister

Can I recapture this feeling?
This night?
This still night.
The baby cries for sister,
And the soft glow of Christmas lights
Radiates from the living room windows,
While the cat eats
in the florescent kitchen.

The coldness of this room
Feels good
To a soul
That wants to freeze the fears,
The sadness, and
The apprehension,
To just go blank.
To just have peace, and
Live
In this moment
Forever.
To be numb,
and pet the cat.
Fat cat,
Who sleeps...
While the baby cries for sister.

Abortion

She knows
Her child never had a chance.
It never saw a birthday. It never felt romance.
It never got a license. It never went to school.
It never loved a puppy. It never broke a rule.
It never felt the rain. It never bought a car.
It never smelled a flower. It never gazed at stars.
It never got a job. It never fell in love.
It never saw its momma, or the sky above the home
It never had.

Thinking only of herself, she took a life
Before its time.
No matter how often she cries herself to sleep,
It's far too late to change her mind.

John A. Talley

Declaration of Friendship

I will praise you when you win and share your pain if you lose.
Always I will accept you for who you are and not how much or how little you achieve.
I will strive to bring out the best in you while forgiving your faults.
I won't expect perfection from either of us.

I will listen to all you need to tell me, and I'll try to let you know that I hear you.
I will respect your opinions and support your choices.
I will believe in your dreams and do my best to help you fulfill them.

I will be sincere in my appearance, words, and actions.
I will tell you the truth, although it may hurt,
For I know that telling a lie would hurt even more...
I will fill your need for closeness, yet respect your need for privacy.
And I will try to remember that our needs for solitude may not always be in accord.

In the tomorrows we share, I pray that I can be sensitive to your needs,
understanding your concerns, patient with your mistakes,
and comforting in your pain...
That I can give as much of myself as you need, and all the love you deserve.

In the tomorrows we share, I will never let the sun set on our anger or unresolved hurt.
And I will see each sunrise as a chance to celebrate you anew,
To convey how much I need you, how constantly I think about you,
and how much I love you.

Take Time

Take time to think -
It is the source of power.
Take time to play -
It is the secret of perpetual youth.
Take time to read -
It is the foundation of wisdom.
Take time to Pray -
It is the greatest power on earth.
Take time to love and be loved -
It is a God given privilege.
Take time to be friendly -
It is the road to happiness.
Take time to laugh -
It is music to the soul.
Take time to give -
It is too short a day to be selfish.
Take time to work -
It is the price of success.
Take time to do charity -
It is the key to Heaven.
Take time to smile -
It is easier than a frown.
Take time to look up-
It is better than looking down.

Don't Rush In

Sea shells hold a special song,
Of a love that somehow went wrong,
The moon has told a thousand lies,
That turned into so many good-byes.
The sea has cried a thousand tears,
For love that has faded through the years.
The breeze has brought back faded dreams of the past,
The dreams of those who were in a hurry and went too fast.
And if the stars could talk-
If only the stars could talk-
They'd tell you that before you learn to run,
You first must learn to walk.

Time

And the celestial bodies followed along their blind paths, and the silent monotony was suddenly shattered and the earth revolved... Tyrannasaurus Rex breathed his last, man breathed his first, and the earth revolved...Great empires rose and fell, powerful leaders lived and died, and the Christ child cried out in the night, and the earth revolved.... America declared her revolution, only to turn on herself in later years, and machines boomed into a shocked new world, and the earth revolved.... New ideas crept their ways into the hearts of men and every nation rose up against one another, and peace seemed to be a memory, and the earth revolved.... Martin Luther King, Jr. made his stand, and Vietnam closed in as the jaws of death, and teenagers fought war with peace, and the earth revolved.... Visions of an uncertain future were seen, and modern technology took the world by storm, and a deadly accident occurred in Chernobyl, and the earth revolved.... New programs for the space shuttle were underway, and Reagan struggled with the Tower Commission, and the arms race is going strong, and the earth revolved.... Desperate rulers are terrorizing the world, and many nations are fighting, and peace talks are generating in Geneva, and the earth is revolving.... Fashions are coming more distinct yet more free, and teenagers are preparing for adulthood, and school is becoming more demanding, and the earth is revolving.... Drugs and alcohol are problems out of control; divorce is a part of marriage, rock music is taking a moral stand, and the people in Somalia are starving, and the rich get more money as the poor get less, and the earth is revolving.... Today's children will be tomorrow's leaders, and man will make waves through sea and sky, and honesty will be an art lost in itself, and the earth will revolve.... Prejudice will be forgotten, and churches will be burning books, and records will have movie ratings, and the earth will revolve.... Homes will be built on the final frontier, and the ozone layer will be heated away, and time travel will be mastered with ease, and the earth will revolve.... Scientists will control the outcome of babies, and....

Time must be taken to look at our mistakes, or how else will we know when we are wrong? Time must be taken to examine our lives, or how will we know if we are living them? Time is not just a way to count the hours, it is an abstraction that binds us to unknown limits. How much Time do we have before we die? How much time do we have before we live? Time is never the way we want it to be--it is either too fast or too slow. But is it really Time? Time is abused more than anything else; no one notices it there. Yet, suddenly in pressing situations, we "only wish we had more Time." What no one realizes is that we did have more Time, but we let it slip away. And so, the Time changes--or do we change with the times? We must "take Time," but what are we taking time from? We are taking it from our lives; we are "taking our Time." And we never get it back....

Days

One day becomes another,
A day of hope,
A day of fear,
Days of the past,
Have become
Those of the future.

The Stage of Life

The stage of life is set
And
As I pass from the first act to the
Second,
The curtain is flung open...

To reveal a world of chaos.

Things once steadfast and solid
swirl
Before me and
Black and white mingle into the
Enigmatic shades of grey.

No longer is the audience suspended
Far away...

I am entered into a new world
And
I must learn to think
to understand,
to hate,
to love,
to care.

Little Brother

I remember feeling quite strongly that my brother was dead as I slowly opened my eyes. The mattress groaned tolerantly beneath me as I rolled out of bed. I stood silently surveying the room in the gentle half-light of early morning.

The hall light provided the only illumination. Passing through my open door, I felt like the privileged diplomat, able to reside on either side of the border without facing prejudice.

It was an average morning, and I was in an average mood, angry. Angry at my mother for leaving my underwear on the top of the pile of clothing she had sat at my doorway (an act that always left me with an unreasoning feeling of having been violated by my Hanes laying there for the world to see, even though I knew there was no one in the house to look). Angry at my father for having misplaced my favorite shirt the night before, thereby hindering my plans to wear it that day. Mostly though, I was angry at my little brother, angry that he had awakened me with the blare of his radio, angry that he was always in such a good mood in the morning, that my mom never once yelled for him to hurry up and get ready, and angry at him simply because he was my younger brother by ten months, and all older brothers are supposed to think of their younger siblings as pests.

As usual, he was the first to the table for breakfast, and consequently he got the first and biggest egg, the best piece of toast, and in my opinion the tallest glass of orange juice. All of this, of course, did nothing to cool my temper toward him, so when he cracked a ridiculous joke between mouthfuls, I explained to him that he was the most pathetically stupid ignorant jerk that it had ever been my displeasure to know. I, of course, received a quick reprimand for this barrage, while he was handed an extra piece of toast to "soothe his wound."

As we left the house and strolled to the bus stop, he seemed to draw into himself and lost much of his joyful attitude. This pleased me greatly, and I furthered his depressed condition by questioning him on the details of his rejection by the girl he had been chasing for weeks. She had flatly refused him the day before, and though I knew everything that happened, I wallowed in the look of sadness my teasing brought to his face.

When we got to school, my brother and I separated and entered our respective groups of friends. I was popular and an athlete, so my friends and I paid little attention to others around us, especially my brother. He was quiet and intelligent, the kind of kid who would cringe at the phrase "detention hall," and his friends were beneath my notice. I saw him once, passing through the halls during the day, but never did I acknowledge him in any way.

Once home from school everything changed; I no longer pretended not to see him, but instead I taunted him every chance I got. Though I never actually struck my brother, I let him know in no uncertain terms, that the apathy, or even disgust I felt toward him was intense.

That night at dinner he was quieter and more withdrawn than usual. When we started for our rooms to go to bed, I noticed that he walked as if in a daze. I figured the idiot had simply started dreaming ahead of time and crawled into bed, thinking nothing of it.

The next morning I rose, once again in a foul mood. When I found the bathroom door locked, I banged loudly, ordering my brother to open it immediately. When he did not answer several of my calls, I got the pen-sized screwdriver out of my desk, and proceeded to pick the lock. As I flung open the door, I prepared to blast the little pain in the neck, and nearly stumbled over his already cold body, laying on the tiles in a darkening pool of his own blood. His wrists were slit neatly in semi-circles, and he had stuffed a soft brown rag in his mouth to muffle his own cries.

Kelly Walls

I had a quiet dream, a silent dream of winter.
My heart languished in the loneliness
Of this winter's coldness
And I cried.

I wept for loss of harmony.
I wept for loss of friendship.
I felt my heart turn black
And I felt my heart turn brittle.

I have let my heart bleed itself dry.
I crave its spent blood to wet my eyes.
I wish to drown softly
In the waters of Bethesda
And to quench my tired soul.

As the days flare out,
I carve my own sarcophagus,
Grand and exact,
And I speak the words,
"Time is not eternal."

I seek nothing now.
Yet I am not wise,
Only silent and heart-broken.
A star burns somewhere east of the moon-
And I have come to know
We fashion our own deaths.

The Meaning of Existence on a September Evening

There was a coldness that night-
I recalled a star
That gleamed so bright, so clear.
I knew not of wisemen
Searching for a child,
But of a child turned man
Searching for a heart.

An Afterthought

If I were karma,
I would bless your soul
With vivacity and exhilaration.
Never would there be a day of sadness
To haze your mind or poison your body.
You would know the might of wisdom
And behold grandeur in the sun's fire.
For you would I bewitch the stars
And every prayer I prayed
Would be for you...
If I were karma.

Blind Inside

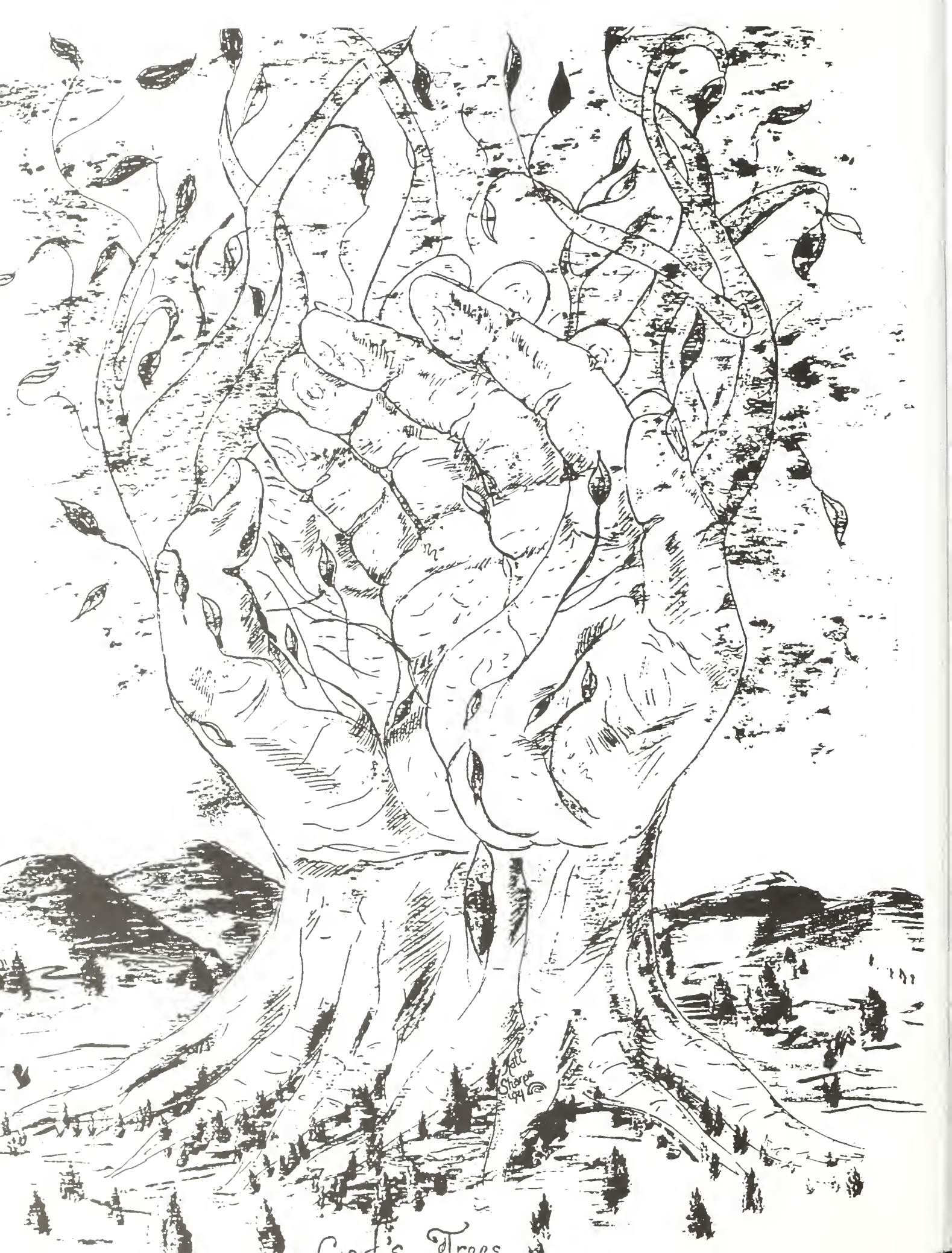
It's been too long since I've seen myself,
Too long have my eyes been outside my head.
It's been too long since I've heard myself,
To know what I've thought or said.
Why do I feel the way I do?
I never really wondered and I never will.
I just eat and drink my fill,
Never seeking anything new,
Never looking deeper within.
I might discover some flaw, something I never saw before,
Which to my great chagrin,
Would show that I was wrong all along.
What are these murky depths in my mind?
I think I'll pretend they don't exist.
But what secrets might I miss?
If I looked down in there I might just find
My true identity, or the lack thereof.
What are these dark alleys in my brain?
Paths where unassessed thoughts scurry,
Dictating my actions, my very feelings, but I never worry,
For I don't know that I'm insane.
Might I be committing gross mistakes,
Driven by thoughts I didn't know I had?
Considering this possibility makes me sad,
But acknowledging the truth is all it takes
To find myself.
I gaze inward with my piercing stare,
And discover hidden truths underneath my hair.
(And I don't mean dandruff.)

Simple City Street

A sea of heads
A directionless mass
of wasted humanity,
Craning their necks
to observe their
progress in life.
They catch the glimpse,
But they are unable
to catch sight of the
Fleeting spirit that is lost
in all of this
Inhuman conformity.
Never again able
to regain the integrity
of the individual soul.

Success

Success is not the possessions
One owns.
Success has its
Foundation in
Simple happiness of the soul.



John
Shore
1994

Forest Trees

Silas H. Garrison

PRELUDES: A Memoir

Author's note: What follows does not pretend to be a finely detailed historiography of Charleston Southern University. An account of that nature has been compiled and composed in an ongoing and thorough manner by Mrs. Margaret Gilmore through resources of her meticulously kept files of people and events that have contributed to the making of this institution. This essay, on the other hand, relies upon chronological detail only where helpful to clarify some significant sequence of events. More broadly, the following attempts to portray and, I hope, to convey feelings and impressions seen from the mainly subjective and unabashedly nostalgic perspective of one who had the unusual opportunity to be one of the "ground floor" faculty members.

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A few years ago a business man, a native and lifelong resident of this area, came from downtown to my office. After he finally located me and we chatted briefly, he expressed profound surprise at both the size and beauty of the campus. He conceded that his only view of CSU had heretofore come from occasional glances our way as he plied I-26.

Those of us who have been around CSU since its inception may be startled to realize there are some, even close by, who are only marginally aware of our existence, let alone our history. Perhaps a number of these folk assume that, like any academic community, this one also fits the pattern touted by the worn old myth, namely that all universities are by nature cloistered from the harsh truths of raw reality and that, just possibly, our "ivory towers" of learning simply sprouted overnight like a field of magic mushrooms. Others may be of the opinion that the school, like Topsy of the little poem, "just grewed" but without real design or intent.

Of course none of these mini-scenarios bear any resemblance to reality. Still, it is also realistic to remember that, compared to most universities, CSU, at the ripe old age of thirty, remains something of a Johnny-come-lately in the frequently rough and tumble arena of higher education. But the paths that have led this far did not result from either haste or myopic vision. And, at the risk of sounding trite to some, it can be said that the physical, spiritual and intellectual realities that best represent CSU today were preceded by and harvested from the seeds of many dreams. Further, these dreams were underpinned by dedicated concern and their fulfillment exacted much of that same "blood, sweat, toil and tears" Winston Churchill promised the British people in their struggle to defend and rebuild their country.

So, adequately to address the genesis of CSU one must recall some events that antedate the school's formal opening by several years. Return with me, if you will, to those thrilling days of yesteryear.

When messengers from across the state came to the 1957 South Carolina Baptist Convention, held that year in Citadel Square Baptist Church, they were greeted by a large banner stretched from one side of the sanctuary to the other, on which bold red letters proclaimed: A BAPTIST COLLEGE IN THE LOWCOUNTRY BY 1959.

This was my first knowledge of plans afoot for such a college, since I had only recently returned to the state after living several years in Kentucky. But I was immediately impressed by such an idea and interested in knowing more details. My roots were firmly secured in Baptist higher education, and I was a graduate of three such institutions. Now, suddenly the vision of expanding Christian higher education in this state held a challenge to become part of what promised to be a rare opportunity. Although I held my respective alma maters in high esteem, still a new Baptist college that would be built in this region, the cradle of Baptist education in the South, was a fitting goal. After all, Dr. Richard Furman's remarkable ministry at First Baptist of Charleston in the early nineteenth century was unique in its emphasis upon the importance of having an educated clergy and people, a vision which became the wellhead of virtually all Baptist colleges begun in the South prior to the twentieth century. Moreover, all other South Carolina denominational colleges were located north of Columbia, rendering the concept of a new church-related college a practical mission undertaking as well as providing a spiritual and cultural influence in this area.

The next three years witnessed diligent efforts to move toward the goal set forth on the banner at Citadel Square church. By 1960 a group of ministers and laymen from the lowcountry area had formed a "board of managers/trustees". Their objectives included finding a site for a new college and addressing the numerous conditions set forth by the convention to properly prepare groundwork that could lead to the formal establishing of the school. Obviously, starting a new college was by any measure a momentous undertaking, a history-setting precedent; going off half-cocked and quasi-prepared could easily result in all efforts quickly dying on the vine. All those involved were cognizant that in some states Baptist colleges had been recently begun but, sadly, not every one of them had succeeded. So, the challenge was to keep moving steadily, but not hastily nor impetuously.

One of the major conditions set forth by the convention was that half-million dollars be in hand before construction began or classes offered. Much of this financial support would come through a myriad of benefactors from churches and individuals around the state, but especially those in this area. Some of these were modest while others were remarkably generous. All were encouraging. But in addition to the securing of finances, the trustee/managers faced a plethora of decisions as plans proceeded on many levels and at a constant pace for the next four years.

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November 1963 saw the state convention meeting again, appropriately, in Charleston and back at Citadel Square church. At this time the convention gave overwhelming approval for the college's being officially chartered with the Secretary of State, which step was taken in early 1964. This action on the part of the convention understandably resulted in much celebration and growing excitement from the college's supporters. And now there was even greater anticipation that the fall of 1965 would see the first class enrolled.

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Original plans had been to name the school The Lowcountry Baptist College, but there was now general consent that the official name be Baptist College at Charleston, lending a more specific demographic emphasis to the flavor and locale of the campus. The name, of course, later was changed to Charleston Southern University in 1990. Already the city of Charleston had sold the convention, at a remarkably modest cost, 500 acres of beautiful woodland for the campus site. The land, as we all know, was located at the intersection of newly-completed I-26 and Highway 78. Abstract ideas were rapidly becoming concrete realities.

By the early months of 1965, my own interest in the school intensified as planning continued to accelerate. By then administrative appointments were being made: the first president was Dr. John Hamrick; the first academic dean was Dr. John Barry, under whom I studied philosophy in undergraduate school. Charles Price, an undergraduate classmate, was to be dean of students. In the spring of

'65 an invitation was extended me to become part of the faculty when classes began in the autumn. I had been involved for a decade in church ministry in Kentucky and South Carolina, but I also had long nurtured a strong interest in teaching, especially in the area of Christian higher education if that were ever possible. So, it was relatively easy deciding to accept the invitation to join this new venture in education. This would mean realizing the opportunity to teach full time, and also a chance to pursue some evening and summer graduate classes at USC, leading, ultimately, I hoped, to a terminal degree in English.

Although the college-to-be had now obtained the 500 acre spread made available by the city of Charleston, no buildings would be completed on the site until the fall of 1966. So, the nearly 500 students enrolled in 1965--and who formed the nucleus of the pioneer graduating class of 1969--would be meeting classes in the First Baptist Church of North Charleston, thanks to the graciousness of the congregation and pastor, Dr. Paul Pridgen, yet another classmate of my undergraduate years.

That early September morning of 1965 was a clear and mild one as I drove the ten miles from my home downtown to the North Charleston church "campus." I found myself humming along with the car radio from which issued the bouncy, brassy tones of Herb Albert's A Taste of Honey. Ordinarily registration day would not have provided all that much to hum about. But this one was different: in fact, of course, it was historically peerless. True, there were the normal apprehensions inherent in such a day, but these all seemed overshadowed by the high-spirited anticipation in the air.

A line of students was already in place by the time I parked behind the church and beside an un presupposing, two story frame building. This structure had once been a church-sponsored canteen during the Second World War. Now it was about to undergo another baptism of service, with the ground floor providing space for a student center while the upstairs housed the administrative offices of the college.

As the registration line moved slowly into the church's educational building, there was clearly a spirit of purpose and determination motivating administration, faculty and, especially, students. Permeating all the hustle and bustle, the sometimes frantic, sometimes hectic activity of the day was the students' blithe awareness that they were uniquely on the cutting edge of this educational milemarker.

To be sure, we still faced an array of hitches that frustrate and hobble the process of registration anywhere. But, overall, patience and good nature carried the day. In retrospect, this registration--hitches and glitches notwithstanding--stands in memory as one of the smoothest we were destined to experience, and this many years before anyone knew what a computer was. The warm smile of Providence seemed upon us that day.

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Once registration was completed and classes begun, daily routine quickly settled in. And the normal stresses that can be expected to accompany the operation of so complex an organism as a college were exponentially multiplied in a fledgling operation such as ours. Often it seemed we bounded from one crisis to another with dizzying speed and numbing velocity. And, to be expected, the wide spectrum of personalities and temperaments present in any organization, and especially, perhaps, in a new college, produced understandable differences of opinions in many areas. Most of these differences, however, gave way before efforts at positive and harmonious syntheses. The ethics of underlying Christian goals helped salve any frayed feeling, and more positively, bind together the rich fabric of talents essential for both unity and diversity.

Very early was the realization that a college is not made up of people; it is people. And integral in this realization is another, namely that a denominational college is not merely an educational assembly line, but rather a community of mutual learning and interdependence, a blending of faith and knowledge. These concepts were the linchpins in forging of our mission and purpose.

Those earliest days, then, witnessed the coming alive of what students came to refer to as "the instant college." Of course there was a catalog in place before the first students signed up, and under the guidance of Howard Bagwell and Jim Settle, there soon was a bustling athletic program with both the basketball and track teams turning in a remarkably successful performance that first year. Dr. Cuttino in the first few days drew together an impressive college chorus from an excellent pool of musical talent. Mrs. Margaret Gilmore and I were advisors for Vol. 1, no. 1 of the student newspaper. It was my fortune also to serve as advisor for the yearbook and to work with a talented and diligent student staff to produce the first issue of The Cutlass.

To this premier class there fell the unprecedented task of originating names for the athletic teams, deciding on a mascot (A macaw: later the Bucaneer, since the untethered macaw flew from his trainer at the sound of the track meet starter's pistol: the bird was later discovered living with a flock of poultry in Hanahan); coming up with a motto, naming publications, school colors and the like. It was as one student said, with some degree of hyperbole, almost like being Adam and Eve naming creatures of the Garden of Eden. Well, it was not exactly Eden, of course, but still refreshing and, certainly, fun, to realize one was on the "groundfloor" of an institution whose promise of growth seemed increasingly likely to radiate a wide influence in spiritual and educational circles.

It may well be the world has seldom seen so much activity undertaken by so many in such meager and modest circumstances, despite all efforts by the kind people of North Charleston's First Baptist to make us comfortable. When there was seemingly no more room for books, records, staff or faculty, somehow the work went on. Some gave credit to an outstanding stewardship of accommodation that kept the wheels turning amid the press of space limitations. Some thought the accomplishment was little shy of magic; others preferred to think it was little short of miraculous.

Typical of such situations was that experienced by the English Department. That first year the department was comprised of Mrs. Doris McCoy, a classroom veteran of many years; Linda Truluck a personable and capable young lady who was a Ph.D. candidate at Carolina, and this writer. We three shared--in the Sunday school building--an office whose dimensions were, generously estimated, four by six feet. When one of us came or went, it was essential the other two break into a maneuver we dubbed the "stand, shift and shuffle." Close communion took on an altogether new meaning under such circumstances.

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No, it wasn't a plane; it wasn't a train; it was a bird, in a manner of speaking. Actually it was an elongated version of a standard school bus the students had quickly tagged "the Blue Goose." The name was appropriate in more ways than one, since the bus had been built by the Blue Bird bus company; furthermore, it had a high-luster royal blue paint job, with BAPTIST COLLEGE on the sides in gold letters. To some people it was also known as the "holy roller"; but whatever its moniker, the brand new bus for the brand new college was the main--and sole--official means of moving several score boarding students to and from their downtown "dormitory" on Meeting Street and getting them to the North Charleston "campus." The "super bus" was also pressed (very hard) into

service to ferry students on weekend mission trips; transport the athletic teams to out of town games and the college choir on lengthy tours; in addition, of course, were the multiple day to day local runs. Even many years after the campus moved to its present location, the bus continued to provide yeoman transportation chores. Finally the carburetor gasped its last, the clutch lost it grip and the gears ground to a horrid halt. At long last it had to be towed to that great junkyard reserved for such valiant vehicles, its place in the history of the college secure.

Life for boarding students that first year was, like much else, atypical. The students of this brave new world of education were residents (not to be confused with guests) of the St. John's Hotel, a rather musty but historically significant antebellum structure located on the Meeting Street site now occupied by the elegant Mills House. Although the exterior architecture of the present hotel is a faithful reproduction of the St. John's, all resemblance stops there. The history of the old building, even before the advent of Baptist's boarding students, was a long line of rich and memorable events which reflected a good measure of Charleston's role in Civil War annals. The St. John's still had cannon balls buried in its walls, hurled there courtesy of enemy artillery and mortar batteries across the harbor. Some traditions had it that the St. John's was a favorite target of these hostile forces because General Lee slept there on several occasions. Whether this was factual I won't debate, nor would I question reports of many who believe the invasion of our first year boarding students wrought more structural trauma on the building than did the siege of Charleston. Perhaps it was only coincidental that the owners hastened their decision to raze the old building soon after the Baptist boarders found dormitory space on the new campus.

One thing is certain, however: the housing arrangement at the St. John's was to be that of total, complete, no-nonsense gender separation. Girls stayed on the third floor: boys stayed on the second floor and there was to be absolutely, positively no "visitation" between those floors at anytime. Period! To make certain these rules were strictly observed, the talents and easy going ways of Mrs. Gilmore seemed to make her the ideal candidate for role of "house mother," and consequently she was recruited for that task along with her other campus responsibilities. She battled bravely, tenaciously standing vigilant watch over the ever seductive stairwell between second and third floors. But ten days later, battle weary and sleepless in Charleston, she jubilantly relinquished her watchcare to several fresh sentinels. Some have insisted these new chaperons employed numerous devices--from broom handles to tear gas, to maintain a neutral zone between floors. Actually, depending upon which story is believed, there is no undisputed record of anyone's trying to run the gauntlet of the stairwells. The same uncertainty applies to several reports that some of the more athletically inclined young men made numerous efforts to scale outside parapets to reach the third story.

More credible are accounts that several high-spirited youths dropped a few water-filled balloons over the second story banisters and onto the unsuspecting night clerk's desk. He, understandably, was less than amused, but never able to identify with certainty the perpetrators of this latter day bombardment of the St. John's.

All in all, however, the routine for the St. John's residents quickly settled into a bustling, challenging regimen. After an evening of presumed diligent study, these budding scholars arose quite early and had breakfast in the hotel dining room, not known exactly as a gourmet's haunt. Then it was time to roll out on the ubiquitous Blue Goose just in time to stem the tide of Meeting Street traffic, and, if all went reasonably well, to arrive at the "campus" by 7:50. The first class was at 8:00, the combined Western Civ/Religion course, taken by everyone at once in the church chapel, a space barely large enough to contain the crunch of the entire student body. The day generally ended in the late afternoon with another thrilling ride downtown on the Goose. Amazingly, so far as anyone can recall anyway, the bus was never tardy for the early morning

class. Perhaps this was due, as one observer remarked, to the bus's similarity to some menacing and alien vehicle plying the traffic currents with 50 or 60 exuberant college freshmen hanging from the windows. Under such circumstances most traffic gladly--if not always courteously--surrendered right of way to such an inspiring--or bewildering--exhibition of irrepressible youth's zealous pursuit of education.

The birth of so many traditions--academically, athletically, culturally--to no one's surprise, sparked a friendly and, presumably, bloodless rivalry between students at the brash, fledgling college and the cadets of the mellow, decades-old Citadel. In those early months, some Citadel wiseacres made light of our--admittedly--modest library holdings, taunting that the stacks contained only one book which, were it to be checked out, would force the closing of our doors. BC students were quick to counterattack that such claims were in fact spurious and dastardly because the military college was in fact simply the world's largest school for bellhops. Other exchanges passed back and forth on the student grapevine, but the better part of taste decrees they go unrecorded.

All said thus far affords only the briefest glimpse into the background and pristine academic year of Baptist College. Each day of that year, of course, had its full share and wide spectrum of events and emotions. Against many odds, however, that memorable year ended on a high and hopeful note in many regards. True enough, not every problem had been solved and financial crunches continued inexorably to plague private colleges everywhere, especially striving newcomers. Still, a full slate of academics had been completed for two semesters; extracurricular activities blossomed and thrived; summer school soon would begin. Most promising of all perhaps, earth shaking machines had been laboring mightily all that year on the new campus site. Foundations were poured and steel framework locked into place. Finishing touches were being applied to our first classroom buildings--known now as Wingo-Norris Hall and Jones-Ashby Hall. Further, a new gym would be completed and a dormitory ready for occupancy as the fall of 1966 began year number two. In a real sense, we would soon have a home to call our own--permanently--it was now apparent.

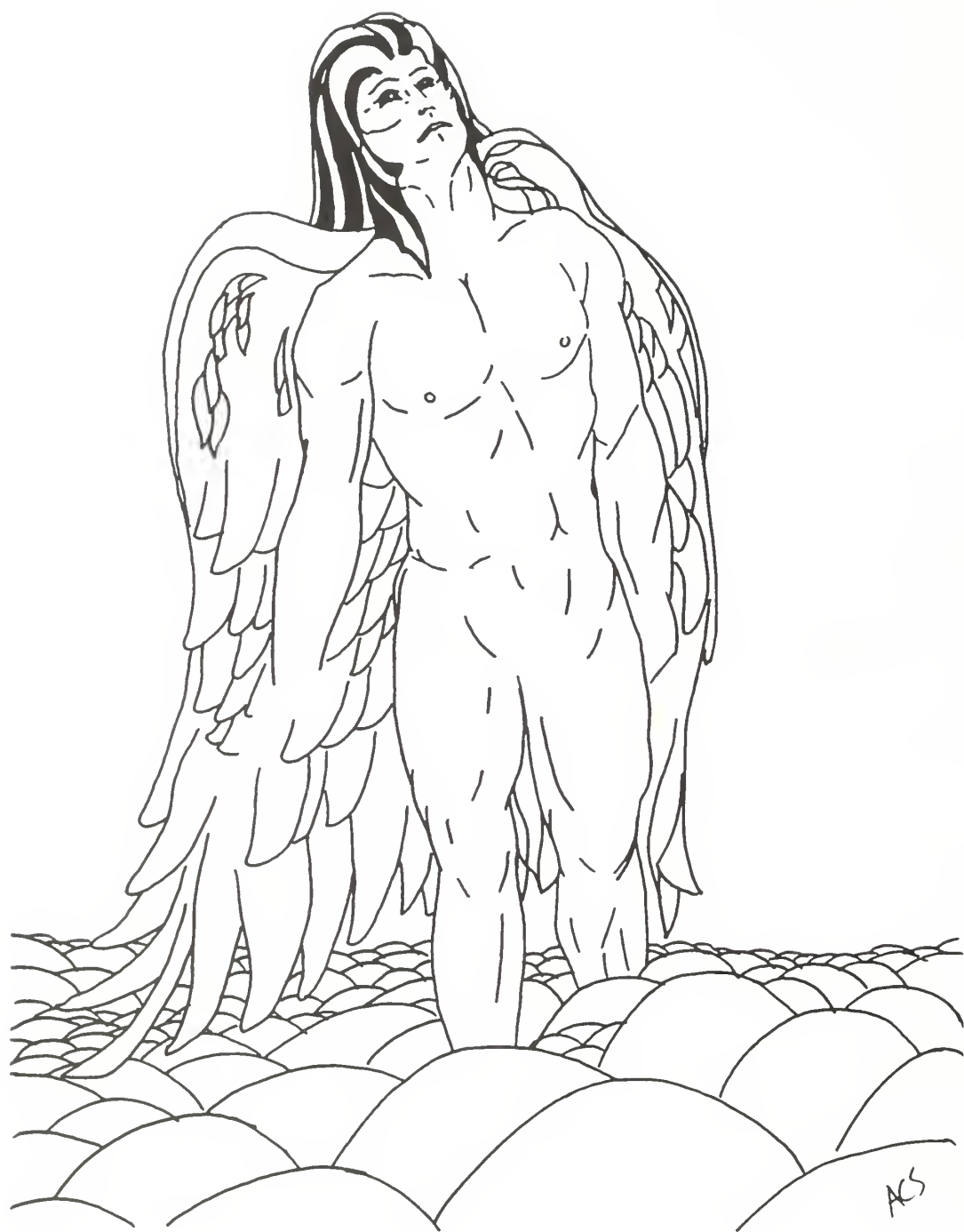
As the encouragingly successful premier academic year drew to a close, many promises had been fulfilled only to be replaced by new challenges at every juncture. And clearly the course of the three decades since then has not been without the shadows of disappointments as well as the shimmer of dreams; despite earnest efforts, some potholes have lurked in the most well-intentioned promises.

In this distant, albeit brief, look back, however, much is there to give heart and sustain faith. Many have come and gone and left lasting endowments for the present, none, perhaps, more valuable than their faithful stewardship of principles, purposes, and people, a gift which is well reflected in the spirit of the old Moravian motto: "in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things love."

With confidence and gratitude we are able to affirm the present as evidence that the past has been but prelude.

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Dr. Silas H. Garrison taught English at Charleston Southern University for twenty-eight years. He was named emeritus professor of English in May 1993. He was educated at Mars Hill College (AA); Furman University (BA); Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (BD; Th.M.); and University of South Carolina (MA; Ph.D.).



Donna Foster Myer

Perspectives on a Cross - Rising

While I was on the faculty of the Baptist College at Charleston (now Charleston Southern University) the chapel was constructed. The steeple, however, was brought to the campus in one completed piece. It was transported lying on its side by a giant truck-looking like something out of a religious science fiction story.

The steeple was raised in place upon the roof of the chapel with a huge crane, a process which gathered quite a crowd, but which took a fairly long time of careful maneuvering. As the afternoon wore on, the weather worsened until, by the time the steeple was firmly in place, the sky had darkened and it was cold and raining with a nasty wind. Almost everyone watching had gone home for the day - and I was going, too. But as I left, I turned once more to see how the "finished" chapel looked and realized it was not finished. The workmen were hurrying to complete their task by placing the cross on the top of the steeple. I stepped out to watch. One of the workmen simply grabbed the cross in his arms and was lifted up into the air by the crane. I stood transfixed, the experience much more than fulfilling curiosity about the task. I wrote the poem from my car - this is what I saw.

The crowds are gone .. the wind blows cold
And, as I turn to leave,
Against the gray and troubled sky, I see a figure,
Bold outlined against the clouds - a man upon a cross.

They soar into the air, until a flash of errant sun
Makes clear the sight.
And I can see it is not cross that the bears the man - but
Man who bears the cross into the heights.

He holds it fast - and, buffeted by wind, they lift to meet
the cloud. And when the man returns to earth -
The cross remains high in the sky,
Thrust up to meet the storm.

A focus for the lightning, so it seems.
High.
Empty ... there against the sky -
The man is gone.

And I can see it was the same before;
'Twas not the man of history hung in a tree -
But rather, that the man embraced the cross
And by that choice, that act of faith -
Did set us free.

It was not cross that lifted son of man into the air
But Son of God who, by his chosen act, did raise the cross
into the winds of history
And leave a symbol there

That stands today; and in our daily storms
it draws the lightening. Or, sometimes,
Reflected glory from the sun - Reminds our earth-bound lives
and cares ... LOOK - what was done!

Look - what a man can do when lifted free from earth on faith.
Lift up YOUR hope -
In that one act of history is both death
And rebirth.

And so, I carry with me now, that image of the pair -
The man ... the cross
Both hanging there in space and time -
And when the job was done ... the man let go.

Gave up the cross, for it was firmly fixed. And He
Went on. And so my days go on.
The son reflected from the cross,
The empty cross against the turbid sky.

List of Contributors

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CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY



0 1965 0125897 0



Charleston Southern University

9200 University Boulevard
P.O. Box 118087
Charleston, SC 29423-8087

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